

UNIT 3:

Planning for Response

Overview

This unit reviews the regulatory requirements regarding medical facilities' and hospitals' emergency/disaster response plans, discusses the staffing resources required to develop a plan and familiarizes you with the basic requirements of a plan.

Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Describe the need for a hospital emergency/disaster response plan.
2. Identify who should be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of the hospital emergency/disaster plan.
3. Locate and review the hospital's emergency/disaster response plan.
4. Use a sample hospital emergency/disaster response plan to:
 - a) Identify procedures for facility and personnel contamination control.
 - b) Identify the primary and secondary areas for patient reception triage and decontamination treatment.
 - c) Identify personnel for response duties.
 - d) Define roles and responsibilities of personnel.
 - e) Identify safety and security precautions.

Pretest

If you think you have the requisite skills and knowledge for this topic area, take the pretest below. If you score within the passing range of 85%, you can skip this unit and proceed to unit four.

UNIT 3: PRETEST

Purpose: This pretest will assess your knowledge of hospital emergency/disaster response plans.

Directions: Read and answer each item. Each answer counts 20 points.

(If you score within the passing range of 85%, you can skip this unit and proceed to unit four. Do not check the Answer Key (Appendix B) until after you have completed the pretest.)

1. What is the purpose of a hospital emergency/disaster response plan?

2. List five individuals or agencies that should be involved in the development of a hospital's emergency/disaster response plan.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

3. List five basic elements that should be included in the hospital's emergency/disaster response plan.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

4. Why is it important to have a hospital emergency/disaster response plan?

5. What is the name or title of the individual who is responsible for the overall development of your hospital's emergency/disaster response plan?



The Hospital Emergency/Disaster Response Plan

There is an increasing concern on the part of medical facilities throughout the nation on how to deal with hazardous materials response. Proper planning for emergencies is necessary to minimize employee injury and property damage. The hospital's emergency/disaster response plan is a critical document in ensuring that the hospital or medical facility is prepared to respond to hazardous materials incidents. The hospital emergency/disaster plan describes the policies and guidelines to follow in the event of a hazardous materials incident. Hospitals' emergency/disaster response plans will vary, but there are certain minimum requirements that any plan should meet. These requirements are specified, in part, by the following:

- Current Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) *Accreditation Manual for Hospitals*
- National Fire Codes
- The community emergency preparedness plan
- Community fire and sanitation ordinances
- Applicable state and federal regulations

When developing your plan, you should consult the latest version of the JCAHO *Accreditation Manual for Hospitals* to obtain information on the basic requirements for the emergency preparedness program. The table below presents some of the requirements central to any hospital emergency/disaster response plan.

Some Basic Requirements for a Hospital Emergency/Disaster Response Plan

- Roles and responsibilities of the hospital and staff
- Organizational and reporting structure in an emergency
- Fire plan
- Guidelines and policies for access to emergency care areas
- Communications systems alternatives (when main communication system fails)
- Guidelines to follow when electrical, air conditioning, plumbing, boiler systems, and essential life support systems fail
- Guidelines for patient management (scheduling, modification, discontinuation of services, control of patient information, and admission, transfer, and discharge of patients)
- Evacuation plan
- Special equipment requirements (for hazardous materials incidents)

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The plan should be updated continuously to ensure that all information is up-to-date and accurate.

Basic Components of the Plan

Though the exact format of the disaster/emergency response plan will vary, it will usually consist of the following components:

- The **basic plan**, which is a relatively broad conceptual framework describing the policy and approach to emergency operations.
- **Supporting annexes** that contain information on specific functional responsibilities, tasks, and operational actions needed to deal with particular hazards. The focus of an annex is on operations—what the function is and how it is carried out. Annexes are action-oriented and written for personnel charged with executing the plan. Examples of annexes include warning, evacuation, and fire and rescue. Because the requirements of hazardous materials incidents differ markedly from those of other emergencies, a separate hazardous materials annex to the generic operations plan is needed to address these issues.
- **Implementing guidelines**—these may be in the form of hazard-specific appendices, standard operating guidelines or checklists. They support annexes and contain technical and detailed operational information for use by emergency personnel, including such information as lists of people to alert under specified conditions and specific "how to" instructions for operating departments or individuals to carry out assigned responsibilities.



Exercise: Locate Your Hospital's Emergency/Disaster Response Plan

Does your hospital have an emergency/disaster response plan?

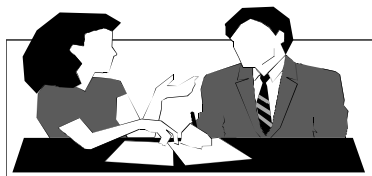
Locate a copy of the plan because you will need it later to complete an exercise.

The Importance of an Emergency/Disaster Response Plan

The effectiveness of response during emergencies depends on the amount of planning and training performed. During hazardous materials incidents, many additional burdens may be placed on a medical facility. Medical facilities may be receiving potentially contaminated or exposed patients who may require immediate actions and perhaps isolation or **decontamination**. In addition, persons evacuating their homes may forget to take the medications they need for chronic conditions. Such patients will often end up in the emergency department because they do not have their medication or failed to take it in the required time period. The stress effects of hazardous materials incidents can cause an increase in such medical conditions

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as cardiac problems, premature births, traffic accidents, and other stress-related symptoms. When all of these incidents are compounded, a facility can be overwhelmed quickly—unless detailed procedures for handling such incidents are available and readily accessible.



Personnel Involved in Developing, Implementing, and Evaluating an Emergency/Disaster Response Plan

Management must show its support for hospital safety programs and emergency planning. It is, therefore, management's responsibility to see that a program is instituted and to ensure that the program is reviewed and updated frequently. The input and support of all employees should be obtained to ensure an effective program. The primary goal should be to include representatives from all departments that may be involved in responding to a hazardous materials incident. Because your response to hazardous materials events may involve close coordination with outside officials and organizations, you should also include representatives from community organizations and local emergency response agencies.

For example, under the provisions of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) have been established to develop a community-wide emergency response plan for dealing with a chemical release. The law requires that medical personnel be a part of the LEPC membership.

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The table below lists some of the personnel who should be involved in the development of the plan.

Personnel Involved in Developing an Emergency/Disaster Response Plan	
Hospital Personnel	Other Personnel/Agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical staff• Nursing administrator• Facility engineer• Housekeeping services representative• Food service administrator• Emergency department administrator• Security officer• Risk management advisor• Public affairs representative• Communications representative• Safety director• Senior management representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Field Emergency Medical Service providers• Fire and law enforcement officials• Representatives of the Local Emergency Planning Committee• Red Cross and human service agencies• Hazardous materials response teams• 911 and emergency dispatch centers• Poison Control Centers• Air ambulance services• Other hospital and medical centers• Public health agencies• Visiting Nurse Associations

During the development of the plan, it is important to remember that it is the planning process, not the creation of the paper document, that is important. Once the plan is prepared and personnel are trained in their respective functions, it is important to exercise the system. The purpose of an effective exercise program is to learn where planning and coordination flaws exist so that corrections can be made.

The emergency/disaster response plan should be developed locally and should be comprehensive enough to deal with all types of hazardous materials emergencies.

Each hospital should designate one individual with overall responsibility for the hospital emergency/disaster response plan. This individual most likely will have dual responsibilities and may have another title, such as director of nursing or safety director.

Do you know who has overall responsibility for the hospital emergency/disaster response plan? Write his or her name here.

Using the Hospital Emergency/Disaster Response Plan

The hospital emergency/disaster response plan can be a complex document; therefore, it is important for you to become familiar with the document—before a disaster strikes. The following exercise will help you become familiar with your hospital's plan (or if you do not have one available, the sample plan).



Exercise: Interpreting the Hospital Emergency/Disaster Response Plan

Purpose: To become acquainted with a hospital emergency/disaster response plan.

Directions: Use your hospital's emergency/disaster response plan to answer the following questions. If you do not have a plan, use the sample plan in Appendix A.

1. Locate the section that identifies the personnel for response duties.
2. Locate the section that defines the roles and responsibilities of personnel.
3. Locate the section(s) that identifies the primary and secondary areas for patient reception triage and decontamination treatment.
4. Locate the section(s) that identifies safety and security precautions that should be followed.
5. Locate the section(s) that identifies procedures for facility and personnel contamination control.



References

Beatty, G. C. 1987. *Developing a Hospital Emergency Preparedness Program*. Chicago: American Hospital Association.

FEMA, EPA, DOT. 1993. *Hazardous Materials Workshop for Hospital Staff*. Emmitsburg, MD.

UNIT 3: POST-TEST

Directions: Answer each of the questions below.

(Check your answers in Appendix B. If you missed any items, you should review this unit before proceeding).

1. Which of the following documents would contain the policies and procedures that *you* should follow in your facility in responding to a hazardous materials incident?
 - a) JCAHO Accreditation Manual for Hospitals
 - b) Your hospital's emergency/disaster response plan
 - c) The state's code of regulations
 - d) The community emergency preparedness plan
2. Which of the following is not a basic component of the hospital's emergency/disaster response plan?
 - a) Basic plan
 - b) Supporting annexes
 - c) Implementing procedures
 - d) Community fire and building codes
3. Who should be involved in the development of the hospital's emergency/disaster response plan?
 - a) Only management representatives from each department in the hospital
 - b) All employees, including management and representatives from every department who may be involved in responding to a hazardous materials incident
 - c) Just emergency physicians and nurses
 - d) Primarily, the hospital administrator and security personnel
4. What is the purpose of the hospital's emergency/disaster response plan?
 - a) To provide details on how to control the spread of fires in the event of an emergency
 - b) To provide job descriptions for hospital personnel
 - c) To describe the policies and procedures to follow in the event of a hazardous materials incident
 - d) To identify the community's fire and sanitation ordinances